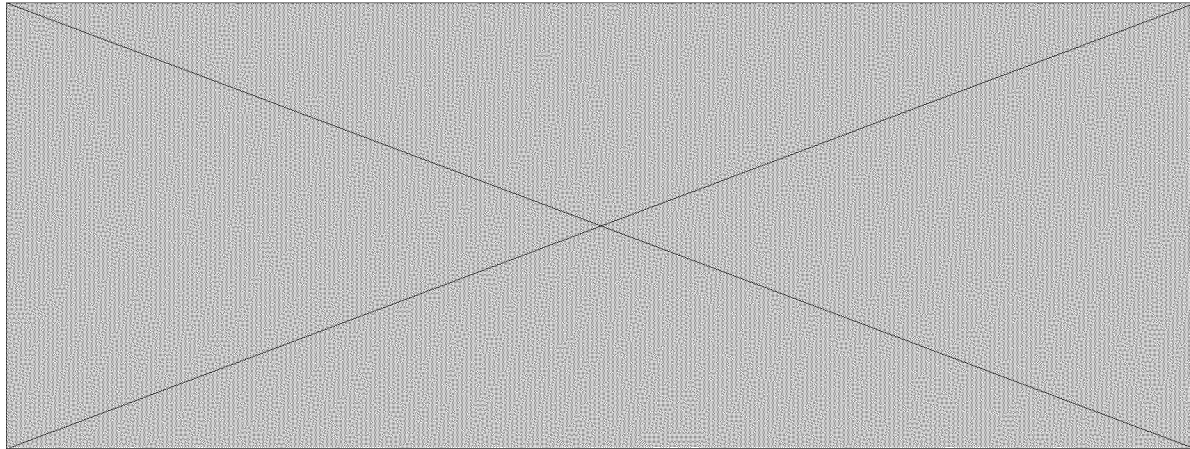


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For Immediate Release:



Eight Native American Tribes Oppose Mining Impacts to Menominee River and Lake Michigan

River Considered One of the Most Endangered in America

July 13, 2017

MARQUETTE - The Superior Watershed Partnership and eight Native American tribes have successfully nominated the Menominee River to the organization American Rivers as one of the Top Ten Most Endangered Rivers in the United States.

Those tribes are the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, the Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, the Bay Mills Indian Community, the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, the Little River Band of Ottawa and the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa.

American Rivers, based in Washington, D.C., has released its 2017 Top Ten list, with the Lower Colorado River, which winds through Arizona, California and Nevada, listed at No. 1.

SWP issued this statement: "The Superior Watershed Partnership, eight Native American tribes and numerous other stakeholders are convinced that this open pit mine is simply too risky. In addition to exposing sulfide based ore, the mining process would use cyanide, arsenic and other toxins, all of this literally a stone's throw from one of the largest tributaries to Lake Michigan.

"The risk to groundwater, surface water, the Great Lakes and the cultural legacy of the Menominee Indian Tribe is simply too great."

AR noted the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin is concerned about potential impacts to river waters, noting that mining operations also would desecrate burial mounds, sacred sites and other culture resources.

The tribe, on its website at www.menomineeensn.gov, said: "The Menominee River is, in fact, the very origin of life for the Menominee people. It also provides life to Michigan and Wisconsin residents and the natural wildlife within the Great Lakes ecosystem. The harmful threats to this area and all who depend on it far outweigh the corporate interests of a Canadian exploratory company and justify the denial of the necessary permits for the proposed mine.

"The Menominee Nation is steadfast in its opposition to the proposed mine and its commitment to preserving the Menominee River."

According to AR, Aquila Resources, a Canadian mining company, is seeking permits for the Back Forty Project next to the Menominee River near Stephenson. The open pit sulfide mine would use cyanide to extract and process gold, silver, copper and zinc ore on the site.

Wastewater would be discharged into the river, with current projections estimating the mining of 16.1 million metric tons of mineralized material over 16 years.

In January, Aquila applied to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality for a permit for impacts to wetlands, streams and the river floodplain. The previous application was withdrawn following an objection from the Environmental Protection Agency.

The company noted on its website at www.aquilaresources.com that it has implemented an Environmental Baseline Study, the plan of which was to include air quality and meteorological studies and prepermitting consultation with regulatory agencies.

Completed actions include biological studies on aquatics, wildlife and flora, and surface water quality monitoring stations established on several rivers, streams and lakes near the project area.

The Menominee River, which is about 120 miles long, forms the border between the Upper Peninsula and northeast Wisconsin, eventually draining into Green Bay in Lake Michigan. It is the largest U.P. watershed and one of the largest within the Lake Michigan drainage basin.

The river and its tributaries drain more than 4,000 square miles. The river also provides habitat for smallmouth bass, trout, lake sturgeon, walleye and pike.

A statement on the AR website, www.americanrivers.org, read: "The Back Forty Project poses a significant threat to the cultural and natural resources of the Upper Peninsula, Wisconsin and the Great Lakes region. There is a significant threat of sulfuric acid leaching harmful heavy metals, including copper, cadmium, arsenic, lead and mercury, and creating acid mine damage impacting the Menominee River."

Groundwater, rivers and ultimately Lake Michigan would be contaminated if the acid mine drainage were to seep into surface and groundwater, posing a significant danger to fish and other aquatic life, AR said.

"These negative impacts may be amplified if, as expected, climate change intensifies storms and leads to greater precipitation across the Midwest," it said.

The Back Forty Project would be the second sulfide mining operation in the Upper Peninsula, following the Eagle Mine nickel and copper mine in Marquette County.

Article by: The Mining Journal

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